AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all prior listings, and all prior versions, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. – 21. (Canceled)

22. (Previously Presented) A fabrication method of a semiconductor integrated circuit device, comprising the steps of:

(a) depositing a silicon oxide insulating film over a patterned silicon nitride film with a doped polycrystalline silicon plug over a semiconductor substrate;

(b) forming a hard mask over said silicon oxide insulating film; and

(c) subjecting said semiconductor substrate to a plasma etching treatment through the hard mask as an etching mask using an etching gas containing a fluorocarbon gas, oxygen and a dilution gas to process said silicon oxide insulating film, so as to form a hole in said silicon oxide insulating film down to the patterned silicon nitride film in such a manner that an upper surface of the doped polycrystalline silicon plug is exposed,

wherein a residence time of the etching gas within an etching chamber is set at 50 to 700 ms.

23. (Original) A method according to Claim 22, wherein a pressure within the chamber during the plasma etching ranges from 0.7 to 7 Pa.

24. (Original) A method according to Claim 22, wherein a total flow rate of the etching gas passed into the etching chamber ranges from 200 to 1000 cm^3/minute.

25. (Original) A method according to Claim 22, wherein a total flow rate of the etching gas passed into the etching chamber is at 700 cm^3/minute or over.

26. (Original) A method according to Claim 22, wherein a pressure within the etching chamber during the plasma etching ranges from 1.3 to 4 Pa, and the total flow rate of the etching gas passing into the etching chamber is at 700 cm^3/minute or over.

27. (Original) A method according to Claim 22, wherein a flow rate of said dilution gas is larger than the flow rates of said fluorocarbon gas and oxygen.

28. (Original) A method according to Claim 22, wherein a plasma density during the plasma etching ranges from 1×10^{10} to $1 \times 10^{13}/cm^3$.

29. (Original) A method according to Claim 22, wherein a plasma density during the plasma etching ranges from 1×10^{10} to $1 \times 10^{12}/cm^3$.

30. (Original) A method according to Claim 22, wherein said fluorocarbon gas is made of C_5F_8, and said dilution gas is made of argon.

31. (Original) A method according to Claim 30, wherein a flow rate of said argon gas ranges from 200 to 1000 cm^3/minute.

32. (Original) A method according to Claim 30, wherein a flow rate of said argon gas ranges from 400 to 800 cm^3/minute.

38. (Original) A method according to Claim 30, wherein a ratio in flow rate between the oxygen and C_5F_8 (oxygen/C_5F_8) ranges from 0.8 to 1.5.

34. (Original) A method according to Claim 30, wherein a ratio in flow rate between the oxygen and C_5F_8 (oxygen/C_5F_8) ranges from 1 to 1.2.

35. (Original) A method according to Claim 30, wherein a partial pressure of C_5F_8 ranges from 0.02 to 0.2 Pa.

36. (Original) A method according to Claim 30, wherein a partial pressure of C_5F_8 ranges from 0.04 to 0.1 Pa.

37. (Previously Presented) A fabrication method of a semiconductor integrated circuit device, comprising the steps of:

(a) depositing a silicon oxide insulating film over a patterned silicon nitride film with a doped polycrystalline silicon plug over a semiconductor substrate;

(b) forming a hard mask over said silicon oxide film; and

(c) subjecting the semiconductor substrate to a plasma etching treatment through the hard mask as an etching mask using an etching gas containing a fluorocarbon gas, oxygen and a dilution gas to process said silicon oxide insulating film, so as to form a hole in said silicon oxide insulating film down to the patterned silicon nitride film in such a manner that an upper surface of the doped polycrystalline silicon plug is exposed,

wherein a residence time of the etching gas within an etching chamber is set at 50 to 350 ms.

17
38. (Previously Presented) A fabrication method of a semiconductor integrated circuit device, comprising the steps of:

(a) depositing a silicon oxide insulating film over a patterned silicon nitride film with a doped polycrystalline silicon plug over a semiconductor substrate;

(b) forming a hard mask over said silicon oxide film; and

(c) subjecting the semiconductor substrate to a plasma etching treatment through the hard mask as an etching mask using an etching gas containing a fluorocarbon gas, oxygen and a dilution gas to process said silicon oxide insulating film, so as to form a hole in said silicon oxide insulating film down to the patterned silicon nitride film in such a manner that an upper surface of the doped polycrystalline silicon plug is exposed,

wherein a residence time of the etching gas within an etching chamber is set at 100 to 200 ms.

18
39. (Previously Presented) A fabrication method of a semiconductor integrated circuit device, comprising the steps of:

(a) depositing a silicon oxide insulating film over a patterned silicon nitride film with a doped polycrystalline silicon plug over a semiconductor substrate;

(b) forming a hard mask over said silicon oxide film; and

(c) subjecting the semiconductor substrate to a plasma etching treatment through the hard mask as an etching mask using an etching gas containing a fluorocarbon gas, oxygen and a dilution gas to process said silicon oxide insulating film, so as to form a hole in said silicon oxide insulating film down to the patterned silicon nitride film in such a manner that an upper surface of the doped polycrystalline silicon plug is exposed,

wherein a pressure within the etching chamber during the plasma etching ranges from 0.7 to 7 Pa and a total flow rate of the etching gas passed into the etching chamber is 700 cm^3/minute or over.

19
40. (Previously Presented) A fabrication method of a semiconductor integrated circuit device, comprising the steps of:

(a) depositing a silicon oxide insulating film over a patterned silicon nitride film with a doped polycrystalline silicon plug over a semiconductor substrate;

(b) forming a hard mask over said silicon oxide film; and

(c) subjecting the semiconductor substrate to a plasma etching treatment through the hard mask as an etching mask using an etching gas containing a fluorocarbon gas, oxygen and a dilution gas to process said silicon oxide insulating film, so as to form a hole in said silicon oxide insulating film down to the patterned

silicon nitride film in such a manner that an upper surface of the doped polycrystalline silicon plug is exposed,

wherein a pressure within the etching chamber during the plasma etching ranges from 1.3 to 4 Pa and a total flow rate of the etching gas passed into the etching chamber is 700 cm^3/minute or over.